

CHRISTIAN KUHLMAN OF THE GILMER RIFLES

Company D, 31st Virginia Infantry

This was a twenty-four page document written by Christian Kuhl, First Sergeant of Company D, 31st Virginia Infantry, aka Gilmer Rifles, CSA. The memoirs were compiled in 1911 from his memory, have been typed and transcribed several times and probably contain many errors. They are provided for your use by [David B. Kuhl](#)

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My daughter has for many years asked me to write down for her future references my experiences and what long has become history of the "War of the Rebellion", to tell it just as it happened to me. So, I will proceed to give a true statement that may be relied upon by future generations.

On the 31st day of May, 1861, there arose a cry that the Abolitionists were coming over from Ohio and elsewhere from the North to invade Virginia, now West Virginia. They overran our country, destroying property, Compelled our men to enlist, taking horses, cattle, arms and ammunition. They also insulted mothers and wives when the men were away from home. This was Too strong a proposition for freemen to sit still and do nothing and not take sides. So I, with many of my fellow citizens of Gilmer County, gathered up all available arms and ammunition. We had Squirrel Rifles with a few rounds of ammunition some had Dirk knives and others had Revolvers (those old fashioned guns were known as Pepper Boxes). These guns were not dangerous unless they were thrown at a man, certainly not dangerous as firearms. We supposed that the object of the invaders was to abolish slavery in Virginia and throughout all the slave states. This supposition proved true later on. In 1862, I believe, Mr. Lincoln's Proclamation declared all the slaves freed in the southern states. As above stated in May 1861, at a general meeting in the town of Glenville, Gilmer County, West Virginia and then Virginia, I volunteer with many of the Democrats from Said County and we organized a Company of Infantry called the "Virginia Volunteer Infantry". This Company elected Rev. John Klem Mitchel as their Captain, who was killed soon after in a skirmish near Arnoldsburg, Virginia.

Said Mitchel a brave, gallant officer fell while leading his men in battle. The other officers at that first organization were as follows: First Lt., H. McNemer, Samuel S. Stout (youngest son of the late Hezekiah Stout), 2nd Lt., Lem. C. Lynch, 1st Sergt., Fleming E. Turner, 3rd Sergeant., and James J. Norman, 2nd Sergt. Later on from time to time and at the other reorganizations their successors were elected as follows: J. S. Kerr McCutchen, Captain, who by seniority was promoted Lt. Colonel and after the war migrated to California. He was a most heroic officer and survived the many conflicts in which his Company and Regiment engaged, but he carried several battle scars on his body. He still

lives in Exeter, Tulare County, California. He is now well stricken in years, 80 some years old, and as honorable as he is old. Lt. Stout also still lives and is in California.

At the reorganization in 1862, this scribe became promoted to the Office of the 1st Sergeant, in which capacity he served until the surrender in 1865 and commanded Company "D" through many of the successful battles in which said Company and Regiment were engaged. He too, was wounded four times and once taken prisoner. Wounded and taken prisoner at Ft. Stedman near Petersburg, March 25, 1865, just before Lee's surrender in April 1865 at which my brigade made a desperate dash through three lines of the Union Yankees in the midst of the Grants forces. For want of promised support, which failed to get up in due time, proved a failure and resulted in the capture of many of our best men in company with myself and Captain John H. Yancey, a gallant officer and son of Hon. Col. Yancey who then lived and owned a large farm at the mouth of Oil Creek, Braxton County, West Virginia. Said Captain Yancey still has a sister living on Oil Creek who is the wife of Rev. Neal Clawson. This scribe passed through the deadly scenes some 32 or 33 regular hard fought battles besides picket and skirmish fights, and under the great leadership of those great and heroic Generals Lee, Stonewall T. J. Jackson, Jubell Early and Yervill Gorden, Pegram and others usually came out victorious.

Now back to Glenville in May 1861, a company was wanted to have 100 men, but we only succeeded in enlisting some 60, and being pressed for time we moved southward to a place called Rendevoose (probably rendezvous), and scene of action with what forces we had, or we would be cut off by the invading foe. We at once proceeded up the Little Kanawha River and found ourselves at the mouth of Oil Creek at a bountiful repast at Old Col. Yancey's - the first of the great army dinners ever prepared in Braxton during the Civil War, prepared I suppose, by the family of Col. Yancey and friendly neighbors to still our first military wolfishness. Thanks to those kind friends, as well as to those long departed orators whose patriotic and able speeches we enjoyed so much after dinner, by Capt. Mitchell, Col. Yancey, Hon. Robert Marshall, Rev. Mr. Wm. Ervin of the Stouts Mills and others. After dinner I helped Captain grind his little Spear at Yancey's grindstone and the Captain remarked--"Now if we meet the enemy I shall endeavor to make my mark." So getting another recruit--namely Jacob Plyman who, Col. Yancey assured his family, should be well cared for if he went. We proceeded to Lewis County to the Skin Creek Church where we sheltered for the night. I was on camp guard this first night, I still remember that first password, it was "Corn". It was here that Captain Alfred Jackson's company joined us from Lewis County, here I first came in touch with the brave men and officers of that heroic Lewis company together with Sergeant Nathan Clawson, then orderly Sergeant of said company, who was later promoted to Lieutenant and still later to Captain and Major of his Regiment. To say that Clawson was a noble hero and always at his post is putting it too mild. He was a time tried and honored friend of mine, for he and I called the rolls of our respective companies together for nearly three years. He was also a scholar and business man, as well as a soldier, for after the war he became proof reader for the New York Times, in which capacity he afterward lived and died. The second we went onward toward Beverly the place of rendezvous, but as we got near that place we got a false report that we were cut off by the enemy and we went to Huttonsville about twelve (12) miles east and into camp there. More troops join us from the south at which place our Captain Mitchell goes back to Gilmer to get more men and was killed at

Arnoldsburg. Later we moved forward to Laurel Hill, while Heck and Pegram occupy Rich Mountain. Soon the above were defeated and fell back, let the enemy in and both forces had to retreat to Caricks Ford on Cheat. General Garnett's battle came off at said river where Garnett was killed and here I saw the first man wounded. This was shortly after a small fight at Philippi, thence we retreated to the top of Allegheny Mountain and later we moved forward to Greenbriar River called Camp Barto, where we fought and defeated the Union forces under General McClellen with heavy loss, comparatively no loss on our side. In this camp our company lost W. Conrad and Issac Keller with Typhoid fever. Now W. L. Jackson of Parkersburg became Lt. Colonel of our Regiment and John S. Hoffman, Colonel. Now we are under what was termed "Old Bloochee" or "Meat Ax" namely, Old General Joseph Johnson from Georgia. Now we have the 31st Virginia Regiment; 12 and 1st Georgia; Hansborro Battalion; 25th Virginia Regiment; Millers Battery and a few Cavalry. Our Regiment consisted of ten Companies--namely, Company: A from Marion County, B from Highland, C from Harrison, D from Gilmer, E from Highland, F from Randolph, G from Pocahontas, H from Barbour, I from Lewis and K from Barbour.

The South by this time was under general headway preparing for war in earnest, new forces joining, Officers promoted for Gallantry and we stubbornly resisted the Union forces. It will be remembered that nearly all of the men in the 31st and 25th Regiments were refugees driven from their homes and their families and property left to the enemy. It might be charitable to say that we were not better men, generally speaking, than were in other Regiments, but the fact that we were fighting for the cause we espoused, our families and loved ones, our homes and property was a double reason why we gained the reputation our Regiment enjoyed.

On _____ having gone into Winter quarters in Pine Log Cabins on top of the Alleghany Mountains on the Staunton and Parkersburg Turnpike in Pocahontas County, with the enemy stationed west of us at Whites farm in the low gap in the Cheat Mountains. On the morning of _____ before daylight the enemy came up and undertook to drive us from our winter quarters. We had blockaded the woods, had two good batteries of Artillery. They attacked us about 10,000 strong under McClellen, we had three or four regiments of infantry. They got into our winter quarters and ate our bread and then bragged about it, but we drove them off three times and finally drove them away entirely about the middle of the afternoon. We lost a few brave and very good men, while we killed and wounded hundreds of their men. General Johnson was in Command at this battle and he was a hero and a fighter.

I forgot to mention in our previous battle at Greenbriar River the heroic deeds of our brave Company A from Marion County of the 31st Regiment. They were on picket duty on the morning of McClellen's attack, our men stationed along the bluffs on the roadside and held the whole Federal forces in check for hours, until they turned loose a battery of Federal Artillery where they were able to drive in one company of our Pickets, so their forces could advance on our camp.

After their Artillery began to throw shells into our breastworks one of those same heroes of Company A who had finally beaten in to camp and took his place in his Regiment in the trenches. One shell fell above our trenches and rolled down in among us, this fellow by his cool thoughtfulness saved the

casualties of that shell by immediately picking it up in his hands and throwing overboard, he said "It might burst in here and hurt somebody." As we watched it roll away down the hill it did burst and hurt nobody, but it did tear up dirt wonderfully. I must not omit the gallant conduct of own Company D of the 31st, namely, C. W. P. Goff, son of George Goff of Leading Creek, Gilmer County. He was on camp guard at the Yeager Mill where we had our commissary store. He stood his post until three cannonballs had passed through the Mill the last of which struck the gun on his shoulder and bent the barrel so as to render it useless he came to our Captain with his crooked gun and said, "Captain, no one relieved me and they spoiled my gun so I couldn't shoot straight, I thought I would see what I must do. If you want me to go back there just give me another good gun that will do good and I'll go back."

I now desire to go back a little over ground already past, to refer to a few striking incidents. Sometimes one sees things that cannot be forgotten, and this is one. The day we passed through Stouts Mills from Glenville, as one would suppose, many friends were at the wayside to get the last glimpse of sons, husbands, fathers, and brothers, and this was very affective, but onecase specially so. Mr. Wm. Conrad from Dust Camp, about a middle aged man and an invalid and who had not been able to do any work for years, he was a near neighbor. He had joined our company ill able as he was, and was marching alone in ranks with rifle on shoulder. His wife, a mother of some six children and a very poor family, grasped him around the neck, hung on as though she could not forbear, saying he could not and must not go. But he was so intent that he dragged for rods along in spite of her ponderous weight and his infirmity. At last shook her off and went along all the same. This was heart rending and I heard several remarks "He'll never get back again" and so thought I, and so it was. As I stated above, although a hero he died with Typhoid fever in Camp Barto while the battle raged at the camp, just like many of my comrades who bade adieu to loved ones for the last time that same eventful day. This Mr. Conrad was a son of old Uncle Farmer Jacob and the well known Aunt Unice Conrad who were among the Pioneer settlers of Dust Camp of Little Kanawha. I recall some four of his children who are still alive and may read these lines. Namely, William Anderson Conrad of this county and his three sisters, Mrs. Lee Ratcliff, Mrs. William Heater, now Bet Heater, and Mrs. Isaac Stout now all of Braxton County.

The subject of this sketch was Hero Soldier of Short History, but I refer to one of his valiant deeds. During our short stay at Camp Laurel Hill there had been frequent alarms at a certain picket outpost. Sentinels had fired at something or nothing and then to camp and reported the enemy coming. So one afternoon my Lieutenant McNemer, who was then officer of the day, said he had a man or two who would not make a false alarm. He came to me and said, "I want a man just now who is a man and a soldier too, and Kuhl, you pick another sure, deliberate man like yourself and go to that big Poplar tree up the Runwhere so many wonderful things were seen, and don't shoot till you see game and then be sure you fetch one in. Now I shall rely on you, who will you have?" I took William Conrad. We went and took our position about bedtime at a large Poplar tree about four feet at the stump. I said to him, "Do you shoot right or left?" "Right", he answered. Said I, "You take that side and I'll take this." We had only stood a short time when we heard a great rustling in the leaves and footsteps on the hard beaten path, and apparently lots of them. So, we got ready one on the right and the other on the left of the tree. Said I, "Keep cool and stand your ground and don't shoot until we see and then

let's be sure we get one a piece." Well, we did. It was dark, and my own orders tried my nerve, they seemed coming fast, but to our agreeable surprise a moment later I could almost have stuck my bayonet into a cow, I exclaimed, "Don't shoot it's Yagers' Cows." They had doubtless been doing the devilment each night as they went down in the leafy bottom to rest for the night.

While we were in camp Alleghany the winter of 1861 we made a desperate raid to the Cheat Mountain low gap at the White Farm. We had only a small force in camp, enough to hold the fort. We took, I think, four days rations cooked in our havers and wraps only what we could do with, also plenty of ammunition. We proceeded down Allegheny Mountain, down the Greenbriar River, thence up the first or east side of Cheat Mountain, down the Cheat River in the woods all the way with not a path anywhere, this part of the Cheat River was exceptionally rough. The further the rougher until our field officers, who were mounted, could no longer ride, and had to send their horses back and take it afoot with the rest of us. But the worst was not yet for soon we had abandon the land and take the bed of the River, right in the water for miles, from ankle to knee deep, for the land was all great rocks, Hemlock, Pine, big Laurel, and little Laurel with great patches of moss growing from rock to rock and over great holes between rocks. One could step down, crotch deep, and all the while hear water running under foot. So the river bed was the best of the two for our road.

I wish here to note that we had at the time with us a few Military Cadets or drill masters, who wanted to show off their Heroism and this was their most sublime opportunity. It was just a little out of their military tactics and they became very sanctimonious, at least we thought so, for they looked very sopy [sorry] and melancholy. The rest of us rather enjoyed seeing them and the field officers taking it all alike without distinction of rank or file or superiority.

After arriving at a point where we must take the second or West Cheat Mountain to the White low gap or Yankee camp and strong hold, we left the river bed and took the mountain all in the woods, and after night, came on the high knob a mile or so east of the enemy's camp, nearly tired to death, foot sore and wet as brutes, we stacked our arms on a great flat in the woods,

Here was a fine bed of leaves, but too near an unalarmed enemies camp and stronghold to be in any degree comfortable. We soon got orders by private messengers to lie down silently by our gun stocks, without fires, and to not speak above a whisper. Wet as we were and cold as it was this proved a very poor night's entertainment, but orders must be obeyed and when something so dear as everyone of our lives and well being, certainly we obeyed.

All went on well and I suppose being tired and where we slept a little until about midnight, I suppose, when a limb fell from a tree, and struck one man on the head knocking him senseless as he broke over orders and raised the awfulest howl. It reminded me of some big hound while being beaten to death, it seemed that it could have been heard for miles, but I suppose fortunately, it sounded so very hound like that the enemy, if even they heard it, would not suspect it to be a human voice. No further trouble until Chicken Crow.

We moved down the hill westward, formed in line of battle above the turnpike road some distance above Hutensville [Huttonsville] and in sight of the enemy camp. All was peace and quiet, no alarm

as yet had been made. We lay here until General Johnson on east end of the pike should make a sound to attract their attention then we were to rush into their breastwork. After a short time one of their pickets came in from the Huttonsville side. He was walking leisurely up toward camp whistling, when all of a sudden he spied our line of battle above the road, he had passed about half of our line when he saw his hopeless condition too late, became alarmed, threw up his head and ran for camp as hard as he could go and howled every jump much like our man did last night on the hill. Our advance guards under Lieutenant S. H. Campbell called him halt, but I suppose he was too badly scared and went on until about three guns fired and stopped him and his howling too. Our guards ran quickly to him, fetched him up to us, Col. Russ, our Commander, stood within a few rods of where I was. The prisoner was not dead and was able to give some information when questioned by Russ. I could not hear or understand what passed, but I saw the Colonel's countenance change to a despairing look. I predicted disaster. I don't think the intention was to make any attack on our west side, but up to this time I don't think the enemy had any knowledge of our situation. We waited in vain for an attack on the other side, but not a sound of Johnson's guns. We waited until about 9:00 A.M., the enemy never came out after us, and we never did know why neither of us attack the other. We, of course, did not understand the officer's plans, but if I had been in command, orders or no orders, when we first got to the road behind them, and had them in surprise, I would certainly have rushed the men right up the road into camp and took everything by storm. This might have been folly, but if modesty forbids me to say so, I would have been brave enough or I will say I would have been reckless enough, to have done so, or else died in the attempt. But, to our entire dismay and without further demonstration we retreated just as we came there. We got back safe to our quarters much worried and not a cent the better by such an enormous sacrifice. While climbing the last hill for our camp one of my men (C. W. H. Gough) came to me and said, Sergeant, feel in your haversack and see if you haven't some crumbs to give me." I had nearly picked the bottom of it myself, but said I, "Here is an old meat rind from pickled pork," and I handed it to him. He just gnawed it like a dog, chewed the salt and grease out of it and said "OK. You don't know how it strengthens me, I was about to fall, but that helped me out."

We remained at camp Alleghany over winter and in the spring of 1862 we moved off toward the Shenandoah Valley and began the noted active campaign of Stonewall Jackson, who was then from time to time, being promoted for gallantry from Colonel to Brig. General, Major General and last to Lieutenant General, all of which he so richly deserved.

Very much has been said and written about our Hero of Clarksburg, West Virginia, and much might have been said with out exaggeration. Much more would have been said of him in his home town and county had it not been for the fact that his was and always has been a strong Republican county. But, in this history and with this historian he has no sins to answer for just because he was a Democrat, or Southern Hero and a genuine Christian gentlemen--no not a spot on his garments, and I challenge even his political or military enemies to show one smotch on his character, or stain on his clean Christly hands.

Jackson was a fine looking figure in the saddle, as fine as one can desire to see, and had several striking features peculiar only to himself. I often saw him in the famous and successful Valley campaign of 1862 and 1863. He was sociable but positive and of few words. He, for a long time wore

a little military cap well pulled forward close to his eyes. I often saw him but can't remember ever seeing him out of his saddle, but certainly he sometimes must have been afoot and I seldom, if ever, saw him ride other than in a gallop. I never saw him indulge in a laugh like other men do, and I can't recall that I ever saw him smile, but I don't say he never did. He was not a sad, sour, melancholy, unkind, repulsive looking man, but to the contrary he was approachable, pleasant and much beloved by all his men! He commanded the utmost respect of his superior officers, if indeed he had any superiors, however, I must admit that ere he was promoted there were many who outranked him in superiority, but I doubt whether they were rivals as to military strategists, and to say he was a heroic military giant, wise Councillor and Christian gentleman is putting it too mild.

I was with him in all his rapid marches up and down the Shenandoah Valley from Harpers Ferry to Lexington, to and fro, time and again. He ever and anon pounced upon his adversary with almost any inferiority of forces, and owing to the fact that he always turned up where they least expected him and always succeeded in routing them.

His enemies well knew that whenever guns fired in their rear it must be some of Stonewall's strategic movements and they soon planned to get away if possible. He was wonderful to plan how to get to their rear and surprise them, but felt no alarm if they got in his rear. On one occasion I stood near where he and his staff were mounted, when a carrier dashed up and said in alarm, "General did you know that the enemy is right here in your rear?" Stonewall replied, "Hush, you fool, we have no rear. About face. Fix bayonets. Forward double quick march." We soon found and drove them from our old rear, which had so quickly and wisely been made our front without any disaster as it would have proved had they been surrounded as were we.

Stonewall had been [the] only Colonel in command of one or more Regiments in the valley in 1861, but as his ability to handle more men became apparent and as more men were available, he was soon at the head of a Brigade, then a Division and later a Corps and still later all the valley forces were under his active and able management.

Reorganization--May, 1862

My company and regiment had only enlisted for one year, so in May, 1862, our time having expired, we were only getting in earnest for war. Troops were being enlisted, and the old of course, were not expected to give up the day for lost. We were asked to reenlist, which we all promptly did. If we had not, and left the cause to the new and unskilled the cause would have faltered, if not lost. So, we all promptly reenlisted, reelected officers at a camp near Fisher's Gap, twelve miles from Staunton, Virginia. I was made 3rd Corporal in May, 1862, and soon afterward was promoted to first or orderly sergeant, in which capacity I served during the rest of the War. It is due me to state just here that very much of the time of my services, from organization on, the whole responsibility of not only sergeant, but Captain rested upon my shoulders, due to the fact that in nearly every battle my superior officers were wounded and left me in command of the Company. So, I headed my little Company through many of the hotly contested conflicts. I should have had the commission of Captain, but for the fact that other parties stood in the way, who were not fit, and could not pass the required examination.

I had always about double and treble duty to do, not only that of Sergeant, which was to call the company roll, rations to draw and issue, clothing to draw from commissary and divide among the men, all reports and details to make, company to report on dress parade, men to drill and always to be present in Camp or on the march and on the battlefield, as well as to head my company as captain when he was disabled. It is also due me to say, I do not now remember of ever being absent at night on going into Camp no matter how long, hard and muddy the miles were. I was always at my post to call the roll regardless of how few were there to answer.

Jackson's Exploits

After reorganization at Fisher's Gap we proceeded to Highland County, Virginia on May 8th, 1862, and we unexpectedly struck a Federal force on the hill east of McDowell. They were in considerable force and took possession of us on the hill top. We pressed on them, not supposing it would amount to much, but West Virginia troops on both sides, under good commanders made a hot contest. We had several killed and wounded, but from what the citizens said on the Highland side the enemy must have lost almost as many as we had in all, I lost there the only brother I had in the South. He got a musket ball wound through the calf of one leg, it was a flesh wound and not supposed to be serious. He held to his gun and everything, but he left his musket to me and said, "Take good care of it, I'll soon want to use it again." But not so, he was sent to Staunton to the hospital and seemed to be getting on nicely, but from some careless nurse proqueuing the wound, it began bleeding and bled so that he never rallied and died. I never saw him after he was sent.

We drove the enemy westward through Monterey and on they fled, in disorder, leaving many of their dead in our hands. We got the victory again as was usual in those days under Jackson. If I am not mistaken in dates, about the 9th or 10th of May, 1863, we pursued the enemy, shoved them from Highland, Pocahontas and Randolph Counties and had a little scratch at Beverly, our infantry advanced through Upshur, Braxton and Lewis Counties and went into camp at Weston on the Asylum grounds for a few days, while our cavalry, in considerable force under Jones, I believe, proceeded westward to the Ohio

River and into Ohio to procure horses and cattle to provide beef for our forces, of which they brought a supply. This was about the first taste of the war carried into the enemies territory and we suffered severely for over twelve months from their brutal ravages. When General Jones returned up Cedar Creek, Gilmer and Braxton Counties, he had gotten under such headway getting horses that it seemed he could not stop. He seemed to pretend that all through these West Virginia counties was enemy's country and continued horses from Democrats as well as Republicans and even from our people who had men in the Southern Army.

I had gotten an eight day furlough at Weston to go home to Gilmer and on hearing of my command going back through Braxton I started to rejoin them. On my way back up Cedar Creek I was disgusted at the conduct of our cavalry. They had just literally stripped everything clean of anything of the horse kind, they even took mares which young colts at home, and that from our best friends.

They came to one good old Democrat farmer--namely, Phillip Moyers, who was ploughing two fine horses, he stopped to converse with General Jones and staff, and told them how glad he was to have the blessed privilege of at least seeing southern troops and how badly they had been abused by the enemy, how they had been robbed, overrun and insulted, but Jones soon cut short his imaginary felicity by telling him--"You now have this opportunity of contributing those two fine horses to the cause you love so well. Be quick! Unhitch and fetch them out, we need them badly and as many more as can be had. It is useless to say that Moyers begged in vain, and the horses were soon ungated without the Democrat's trouble or consent and on their way to Dixie. Perhaps an hour later I had stopped with an old neighbor, Mr. Albert, who had heard of the Confeds approach, he came running in great alarm calling, "John Peter, John Peter, run get "Bets", (that was an old family mare perhaps twenty-five or thirty years old,) be quick, run her to the woods, the Rebels are right here and are taking everything they can get. He was so excited That he failed to notice my presence in the house until I arrested his attention by calling to him thus, "Mr. Albert don't be alarmed, we are Southerners, we don't take private property like the Yankees do our people. Don't be afraid of our men, they won't molest you or take anything you have, but if we were ever so mean we want other horses then poor "Old Bets" ---"Run, John, they took everything below here," continued he. I soon left him to his fate and proceeded up the Creek. I overtook a lady (Mrs. Wilson Cutlip) and her little boy Newton, she was in a great agony because of the Cavalry taking two of her horses, one of which had left a little colt at home. She screamed and cried as I approached, she knew me well and soon told her woeful tale to me. To my surprise and utter disgust I must confess that by this time my confidence began to be a little shaky in regard to our goodness as previously referred to Mr. Albert below here.

Mrs. Cutlip was a very fleshy woman and hot as the weather was she was very red in the face, as she had been running to overtake the Cavalry. I tried to comfort her and soon stopped her by telling her if possible to do so I would get her horses, and to let little "Nutie" go with me and she go home and be quiet, which she did. I followed to the Perkins farm where the cavalry had gone into camp. We soon found the Commander, he was lying down under the shade of a big log for a nap--I woke him, told my business and said to the little boy, "Can you tell your horses from all the rest?" Nutie said, "Yes, sir." So he told us confidentially, "If you let me alone until I get a little nap I'll have the horses brought here and send them home by the boy."

"All right," said I, "You just stay right here by this officer, he will do just as he says, but don't get restless or wake him any more to annoy him in his sleep." I soon pursued on my journey through Sutton where I found the Union men getting very impatient because they thought that all of Imboden's men had passed out, but for the fact that I told them of Jones's Cavalry coming behind. This hushed them for they feared him as well they might.

That night I was safely housed the Rev. Albert Ellison at his very hospitable home on Birch. He was a local preacher of the M. E. Church, South, a Democrat and much of a Christian gentleman. He was a brother of the late Rev. W. P. Ellison and uncle of Rev. Job Ellison. Next eve I overtook my command at Summersville, but ere I forget, just here I wish to credit That Cavalry officer--to my surprise and disgust he sent Cutlip's boy home afoot without the promised horses.

On the morning after camping at Summersville we prepared to leave our own dear West Virginia and set our faces toward Dixie again. Many of our refugees had gotten back home a few days, had the pleasure of co-mingling with loved ones once more, and to tell them of some of our brief sore horrors only to be duplicated with more of the same and even worse and longer ones. This raid was known as the General J. D. Imboden raid from near Staunton to Weston. He was a gallant officer and soldier, rather prudent than foolhardy brave. He cared very much for the lives of his men and would not sacrifice them in mass for small achievements, or to immortalize himself. In return his men did all in their power to execute his orders because they knew he was not greedy of honor at the expense of their lives. This Imboden raid did not perhaps contribute largely to the termination of the war. It was one of the first important efforts to carry the War home to the invading enemy who seemed to regard us as not much, just a pack of Rebels or a little splinter split off of a great Government, without any rights or cause!

Consequently, in all their invasions they seemed to justify themselves in almost any barbarous acts, however cruel they might be. Human weakness is such that anything is justifiable providing it is the other man's ox is the one to be goured. This trip did much to humanize the Civil War. But I wish to observe here that Imboden's Calvary did much on this raid to show our friends that they were but little better than the enemy. This was doubtless due to the fact that these Cavaliers regarded West Virginians all alike, as enemies. They failed to recognize that a large percentage of Imboden's men were from the various counties that later became West Virginia.

But now back to Dixieland. I cannot now remember what route we traveled nor how long the route or time. We went to rejoin Stonewall Jackson in the active operation of the Shenandoah during the summer of 1863. It might be well to mention here a few facts about that beautiful river.

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or head, perhaps in Rockbridge County, on through Augusta, Rockingham, Shenandoah and Frederick counties, Virginia and Berkeley and others of West Virginia. From the town of Lexington through Staunton, Harrisonburg, Winchester, Martinsburg, Harpers Ferry, and over the Potomac River into Hagerstown, Cumberland or Frostburg, Maryland. All of the above named places were traded over and over again by the federals and then by the Confederates. All who have ever been in the valley know well that it is the garden spot of the United States, beautiful, fertile, well cultivated which made it most prosperous. Good roads and its many fine springs and riverlets, and its great rows of all kinds of fine Cherry trees along the road for miles made it most desirable and homelike in those days of War. A whole brigade of men might stop, stack arms and be supplied with what cherries they could eat. We often stopped to do so when we had time in cherry season, but sometimes we could not take time from chasing the "Yanks", or for them chasing us, however, the latter did not often occur especially under Old Stonewall. The Valley was an immense source of Army supplies. Both parties while here largely depended on it and drew so heavily that long ere the close of the War many of the inhabitants had to abandon their homes and go elsewhere, for it was a continuous warpath, first for one and then for the other party and at the last Phillip Sheridan got orders from Federal authority to burn all mills, barns, grain stacks, cribs and bridges so that we might not be able

to hold the ground, as our other sources of supply were too remote. I saw his official report in some northern paper to the War Department that his orders had been executed to the letter of the law. All this was most cruel to take everything from private citizens that they wanted and burn the rest, but if it had been right as Uncle Sam ordered it, he ought to know, but if it had been his own private stuff I don't see how he could have enjoyed it very much. The great peculiarity was, that neither party could or even tried to hold possession for any length of time of any particular part of the valley, as it seemed to be too open and clear to hold. Any point could easily be flanked and surrounded on either side or rear.

We generally accumulated strength and means to drive them from a place, pounce upon them and often push them clear over the Potomac River where we stopped and then quietly retire to some suitable place to camp until they got ready to come up again and then do it over. Some few times we were defeated. I recall once at Winchester under General Ramsuer in 1863 we were drawn into an ambush by a drunken commander of Sept. 19th, had to run a mile or so and lost some good men, but in one month from date we returned again, routed and drove them over to Potomac. And once under General J. A. Early we were defeated near Strasburg, Oct. 19th, 1864. This time we were lost more of the spoil we had captured in the forenoon together with much of our own, also some cannons and prisoners were lost.

There will be necessarily be a defect in this history for want of dates and names of places, due to the fact that when this spring campaign opened we sent back to Staunton some extra baggage in order that we be able for rapid movements and long hard marches. With this shipment I sent some two or three volumes of diary, which I had kept for future reference and these I never did recover. If I had them they would be fine to freshen my recollection. I will, however, give a few incidents without being able to give all the dates.

We found the enemy in considerable force at Winchester on May 25th, 1862, rather surprised and soon routed and drove them from their stronghold. I think the Federates were commanded by General Banks, am not sure about commander, but what concerns me more is the fact that we drove them through the town of Winchester and got much spoil, such as Coffee, Sugar, Rice, Pickled Pork, Crackers, Clothing, and Blankets, all of which we could readily use in our business. Another thing added largely to our happiness was the hearty reception by the ladies of the friendly town of Winchester. Our presence was much appreciated, and to know and feel that we were the boys who had arrested the town from the fellows whose room was preferred to their company makes boys feel very happy. And to get a whooping welcome and to have delivered a town from oppression. The above was termed the first general engagement of Winchester after which there were many. There was not a raid down the Valley that this town was not disputed.

Cross keys is the next conflict. On June 8th, 1862 we found the Federals at Cross Keys. The Federal General, Fremont attacked General Early's Corps and after quite a conflict we routed them with considerable loss. The morning of June 9th we crossed the River to Port Republic. This came of rather suddenly, usually Stonewall made surprises for the enemy, but this time he came nearly being surprised and captured. When he got to the bridge the enemy had a piece of artillery stationed at the

bridge and our men were getting into procession on the other side. Jackson, seeing the situation, commanded the piece to be fetched to this side as they obeyed supposing it to be their own officer he and his staff rode over and out of captivity to his own side. Our brigade were soon in line of battle across an open field, the wheat was beginning to turn yellow. Wheat fields are generally hot places, but this was the hottest I ever was in, and it was the only one I ever saw cut with bullets. There had been no previous provisions made, neither side had any fortifications, so an open wheat field was our only chance. Each minnie ball seemed to cut its little swath and the cannon balls a big one. We fought most of the time lying flat on the ground, my company lost one C. W. H. Gough and one wounded, Thomas J. McGinnis. McGinnis was a hero and so was Gough, he had often said he wanted to die at his post of duty and so it was granted his request. After some hours of hottest conflict we drove the enemy from our fine wheat field, but not much was left for the owner to reap that was not shot or tramped by us or the enemy. That night both our antagonists of yesterday and today seemed satisfied, and we held the battlefield. We camped nearby on the side of the Blue Ridge Mountains.

I wish to correct a statement made in previous pages of this work. I placed the length of the Shannandoah Valley at eighty to one hundred miles, but I find it is said to be thirty-six miles from Lexington to Staunton, thence from Staunton to Winchester, ninety-six miles on to Harpers Ferry is another long span, probably to thirty to thirty-five miles according to map measurement, probably one hundred sixty seven miles. This was often covered by this scribe and his company and sometimes even more, for twice or three times we went as far north as Little York, Pa., Gettysburg, Pa., Washington, D.C., Hagerstown, Sheperdsburg, Sharpsburg, Md., and on the south end sometimes to Lynchburg. All this was no small tramp for men who were very worn, foot sore, oft nearly or quite barefooted, hungry or scarce of rations, each one being his own baggage wagon, having to foot it day after day carrying his knapsack, haversack, canteen full and sometimes even worse--empty--. Sometimes our haversacks were empty and still worse stomachs empty and little hope of filling. We also carried a heavy, twelve pound gun, forty pounds of ammunition in cartridge box, cap box, belt, bayonet, scubbert, blankets, overcoats, oilcloth, that is, when we had any. If we chanced not to have we would eternally haunt and chase the Federals for theirs until we got them, for sooner or later we were sure to succeed, but a few times they got some of ours--never mine I always came out with more than I took in. I remember one time my booty consisted of my own and too full "Yankee" haversacks stuffed with Yankee bread, crackers, pickled pork, coffee, sugar, and Yankee frying pan, cup to make coffee in, etc., this was enough to do me the rest of the day and to give breakfast next morn to nine other comrades who were hungry and were less fortunate, or rather more tampered than I. The above occurred on the noted Early defeat, Oct. 19, 1863 at Fisher's Hill.

Wares Cave was then said to have never been fully explored, no one seemed to have ever ventured to any terminus. A small entrance at the base of the hill had been discovered by someone on a rabbit chase with a small dog. The dog held a rabbit and the hunter pried out rock until the large cavern appeared, perhaps for hundreds of yards, or miles for aught I know. I am still ignorant as to its extent. I cannot now recall where we went from Port Republic, but our next fight took place at Gains Hills on June 27, 1862. My company and regiment were engaged in this historic battle, but we suffered little or no loss in this engagement. Our side came out victorious.

Next in order came Malvern Hill, July 1, 1862. These important movements were all regarded by the northern people as great demonstrations for the downfall of Richmond, but none of them amounted to much, except it cost the Federals the lives and limbs of many of their best men, and the reputation of one commanding General to each fight, for Lee always landed them on the north side of the Potomac from whence they started. Each of the Federal commanders was not only censured, but placed from command and a new and inexperienced man succeeded him. So it cost the U.S. many men and much money and munitions of war to find the right man to take the Confederate Capital, as well as much time, which President Lincoln had measured as a breakfast spell for the 75,000 ninety days men, which he first ordered out--sufficient as he supposed, to crush the little rebellion. I cost Generals Meade, Hooker, Butler, Scott and McClellan twice their military reputation., if indeed they had any, and Then they did not get to Richmond, only a short distance toward it to be driven back with heavy loss.

We happened to be fortunate enough to find, in the person of Lee and Jackson, material who could and would and did defend our capital to the last-- until men, money and rations were exhausted, and then would still dare to fight to the last. I have never felt any humiliation when I view the situation as it was at last at the surrender. Grant at the head of over two hundred thousand, well clad, well fed, well armed and well paid and equipped men with the world to resource, and us about eight thousand effective men in the worst imaginable condition to surrender.

BATTLES WITH DATES

Gains Mills.....June 27, 1862

Malvern Hill.....July 1, 1862

Cedar Run.....Aug. 9, 1862

Bristol Station.....Aug. 27, 1862

Mannassas.....Aug. 28, 1862

Chantilla.....Sept. 1, 1862

Harpers Ferry.....Sept.15, 1862

Sharpsburg.....Sept.17, 1862

Cedar Run

This battle was fought on the ninth of August 1862. Lee commanded Confederates and Pope the Federals. After much hard fighting and heavy loss of Federal life and some on our side, Lee is again victorious. Pope is to be replaced with his successor, and again no nearer Richmond than before the fight. I do not remember the losses on either side. We again hold the battlefield. Here again the noted Rockbridge Artillery and Capt. "Joe" Carpenters' Batteries were engaged. Here Capt. Carpenter received his death wound from which a few weeks later he was to die.

Bristol Station

On the 27th day of August 1862, this battle was fought by Lee and the Federals, still under Pope who had not yet been succeeded, but as usual Lee called him to a halt so he was not admitted to the Confederates Capitol even this time, here we captured a railroad train loaded with all sorts of army supplies. We again, as usual, hold the battlefield. Often on obtaining Army supplies our men would refer the General as being our Quarter Master, which in fact he proved to be temporarily, and a good one too.

Mannassas

August 28, 29, and 30, 1862

Here the Federals tried hard on three consecutive days to force their way through to Richmond, but on account of our extreme unwillingness to consent they again did not get there, but lost much in the effort. Here again the losses on both sides were heavy, but owing to the fact that they always had vastly the superior number, they necessarily lost many more than we did. But we took the privilege to stay on the ground, either because we were too tired to leave for other grounds to camp, or too contrary to be forced to go--the latter I suppose. Nevertheless we were a pretty clever set of boys when kindly approached, but it seems that Pope's boys did not understand our disposition, coming up and shooting into our faces they might have known we wouldn't let them go to our good old Richmond Capital.

Next to Chantilla, Sept. 1, 1862. We again came out winners and hold the ground.

This story seems a bit unfinished. Perhaps that is as it should be.

To all who knew him, my great-grandfather was a sweet and gentle old man. It should give all of us pleasure that his memory's of that terrible war were mostly only good ones. The bitterness of defeat did not seem to be a scar on his memory. These memoirs were all that I had of him until I was well into my forties. Now, I have his picture, his Civil War jacket, his Bible, his obituary, a few miscellaneous writings and a beautiful image of a man who died 26 years before I was born. His grave was even lost to my family. Now, I know that his remains lie on a gentle hill overlooking a beautiful valley.

My second born son was named in his honor. Thank you great-grandfather, Reverend Christian Kuhl, you have enriched my life.

Pages 1 and 17 were apparently retyped by my Aunt Lena Kuhl Spangler. All other pages appear to be a much earlier typing. The daughter referred to in the initial paragraph was probably Cornelia Kuhl Brooks.

